

CRITIC'S GUIDE - 27 JUL 2017

Critic's Guide: Hong Kong

From usual haunts to exhibitions off the beaten path, the best current shows around town

BY MICHELE CHAN



Luke Ching, *No Country*, 2017. Courtesy: Karin Weber Gallery, Hong Kong

'Composing Stories with Fragments of Time'

Karin Weber Gallery

29 June – 12 August 2017

An intimate group show comprising newly commissioned works by eight established and emerging Hong Kong artists, Karin Weber Gallery's 'Composing Stories with Fragments of Time' is a labour of love. Curator Kenneth Young collects hand-written letters of correspondence from family archives and antique shops, and one such anonymous letter dating from 1997

constitutes the genesis of the exhibition. In their respective responses to the letter, the artists weave a tapestry of subtle narratives that eschew easy handover rhetoric, espousing instead a complex fragility of the domestic and the quotidian: a porcelain letter of copied prose that splintered in the mail (Annie Wan, *(Lost) Art of Writing Letters / Hand-copy of Excerpts from Zhi Tingguangshu by Tang Junyi*, 2017); meticulously crafted 'flipbooks' made up of used colonial and United Nations stamps (Luke Ching, *Imagine There's No Countries, Imagine There's No Heaven*, 2017); a collage of anonymous vintage photographs, juxtaposed against new photos and vintage wooden frames, that belie not so much nostalgia for the past than an unconscious clinging to domestic objects in lieu of national and personal identity (Lau Chi Chung, *Letter Without Words 1,2,3*, 2017). A potent pathos permeates, conjured through stories that are fictional (Angela Su, *Caspiar*, 2017) as well as that which are absent – Carmen Ng's *Missing Words* (2017), a series of painstakingly blotted out typeset letters inspired by her father's obsolete typesetting business, is particularly eloquent in its silence.